Appendix F

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

AT&T ASIA AMERICA GATEWAY
Terrestrial Route
San Luis Obispo, California

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

Prepared for:

Mr. Steve McMasters
County of San Luis Obispo
Planning and Building Department
County Government Center
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Prepared by:

MORRO GROUP
A DIVISION OF SWCA

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1422 MONTEREY STREET, SUITE C200 • SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401• (805)543-7095•FAX 543-2367

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Biological Resources Survey Report (BRSR), documents existing biological resources within the proposed AT&T Asia America Gateway (AAG) project terrestrial right of way and access routes. Marine portions of the project are not evaluated. This report is based on biological surveys and analysis conducted to determine what, if any, biological constraints exist within or adjacent to proposed project areas. This analysis evaluates biological constraints such as sensitive habitats, sensitive plant and animal species known to occur within the area, and jurisdictional areas (e.g., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wetlands) that may be present.

This BRSR is intended to provide the information necessary to evaluate the current project's consistency with the requirements set forth by the County of San Luis Obispo under previous AT&T project permits as issued in 1990. It is of sufficient scope to assist AT&T, the County, and other consultants with preliminary planning and project decision-making, as well as responsible agency coordination and consultation, as necessary. General surveys for special-status plant and animal species, sensitive habitats, oak tree impacts, and erosion hazards were conducted, and potentially jurisdictional habitats were identified, but protocol surveys and formal delineations were not conducted.

A. PROJECT LOCATION

Terrestrial activities will occur along an existing AT&T conduit system that extends from Montana de Oro State Park, which is located just south of Morro Bay, to the AT&T San Luis Obispo Cable Station, which is located just west of San Luis Obispo, California (refer to Figures 1 and 2). The AT&T Right-Of-Way (ROW) generally follows the ridgeline of the Irish Hills, south of and parallel to Los Osos Valley Road (refer to Figures 3A-3D). The terrestrial segment consists of an existing conduit system constructed in 1990 that starts at a beach manhole in the Sandspit Beach parking lot of Montana de Oro State Park, and then traverses inland for a distance of approximately 16.9 km (10.5 miles) to the AT&T San Luis Obispo Cable Station (constructed in the 1960s). Beyond the Montana de Oro State Park boundaries, the conduit system ROW exists entirely within private easements held by AT&T, with the exception of two road crossings at Pecho Valley Road and Clark's Gap Road.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project activities proposed to occur within the terrestrial segment include pulling two terrestrial cables (one fiber cable for optical transmission and one power cable) through the existing conduit system, repair of erosion damage, and installation of a new ground bed. The project may also include repairing sections of the conduit system, as necessary, to allow for installation and continued operation of the new cables. The fiber cable will be used to transmit voice, data, and video communications throughout the system, and the power cable (an insulated copper power cable) will carry the required power for the system from the cable station to the marine cable (spliced in the beach manhole). Grounding will be accomplished through a new ground bed that will be installed specifically for the AAG system. The ground bed will be located on the east side of the AT&T cable station (on AT&T private property). A MV-90 power cable would connect the ground bed to the cable station, a distance of approximately 45 meters (150 feet).

Cable pulling operations will utilize two-ton, two-axle, four-wheel drive trucks, cable reel trailers, and one-ton transport and maintenance trucks used for carrying laborers and miscellaneous tools and supplies to the work area. The trucks used for splicing operations consist of a heavy-frame truck with an enclosure for splicing mounted on its back. All of the equipment utilized can maneuver within the immediate easement area and access roads.

While the infrastructure exists for the terrestrial portion of the project, cable pulling operations will involve accessing the route with heavy equipment and will result in at least a general level of ground disturbance and vegetation clearing. Once the cables have been placed and spliced, the contractor will check for any ground disturbance that may need restoration.

The contractor will utilize the AT&T Cable Station as a yard where they can store cable reels and other equipment needed for the project. This space is enclosed by security fencing and all surfaces are improved (paved or gravel). In addition to this yard, AT&T has identified two other possible storage/lay-down areas where the contractor could store or temporarily place equipment and materials. One location is within the Montana de Oro State Park near manhole 89F. This area consists of a eucalyptus grove and is relatively flat (refer to Figure 3A). The other laydown location is located on the Silva property within a horse corral (refer to Figures 3A and 3B). If additional staging areas are needed, they would be located on private property that would first be surveyed for environmentally sensitive plants or animals.

C. PROJECT HISTORY

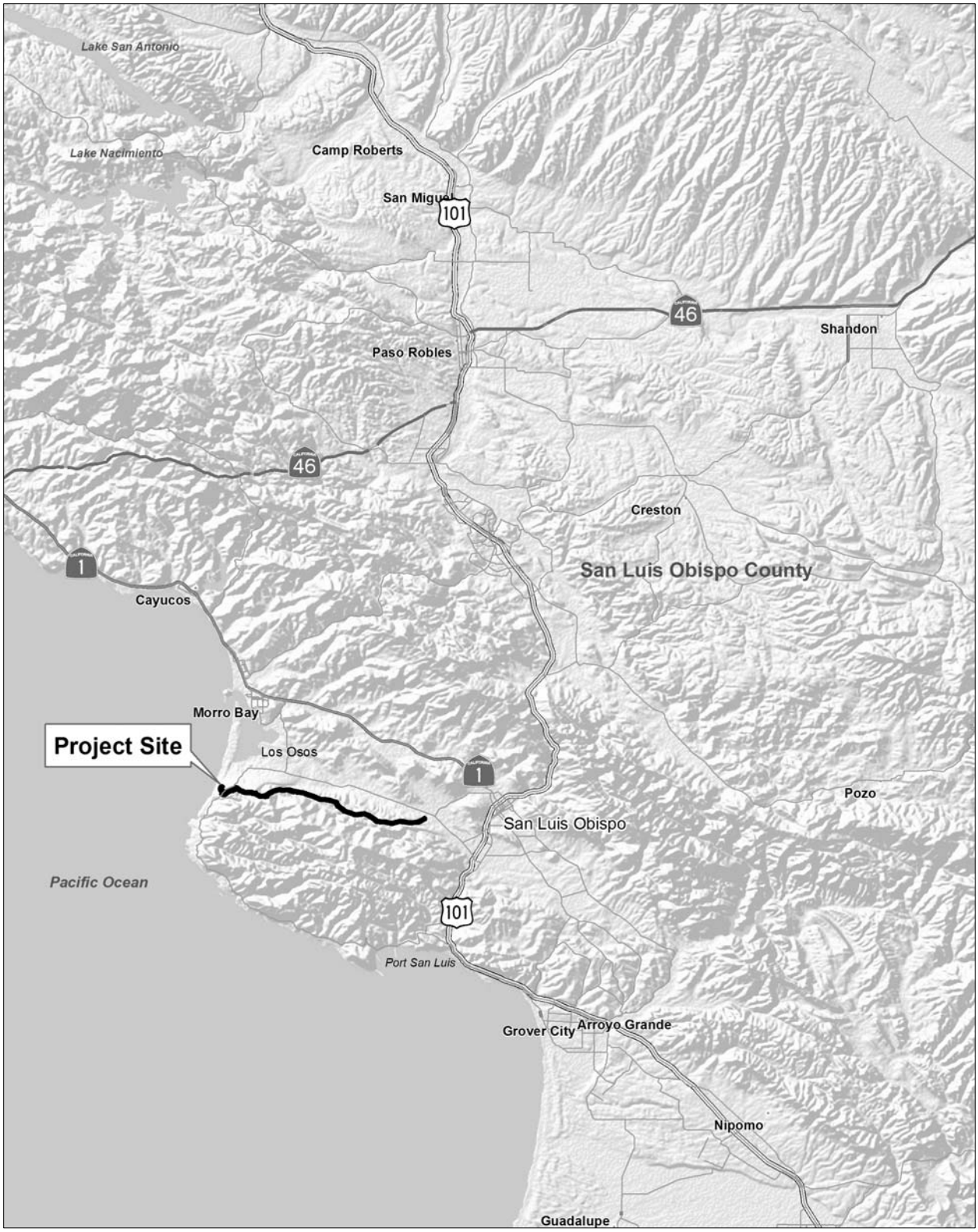
1. Previous Construction Activities along the Project Route

In 1960, AT&T constructed the AT&T 03 Cable Station building just west of San Luis Obispo, and then proceeded to install 2 conduits and coaxial cables along what became known as the "ridge route" west to Montana de Oro State Park.

In 1992, AT&T constructed the HAW-5 trans-Pacific fiber optic cable landing site in Montana de Oro State Park, and extended horizontal bores to a depth of 30 feet into Estero Bay to provide a cable landing location that would avoid tidal disturbance. A new four-conduit system was installed along the ridge route to replace the unusable coaxial conduits, and fiber optic cable was installed in innerducts within three of the conduits. The fourth conduit was left vacant for future use.

In 1994, AT&T landed the TPC-5 cable system in Los Osos, and placed two fiber optic cables and two power cables into the existing HAW-5 conduit along the ridge route to the AT&T 03 Cable Station building. The County of San Luis Obispo reviewed the project, and determined that the cable pull was part of the original HAW-5 permit process and additional discretionary review was not necessary if the project met all permit requirements.

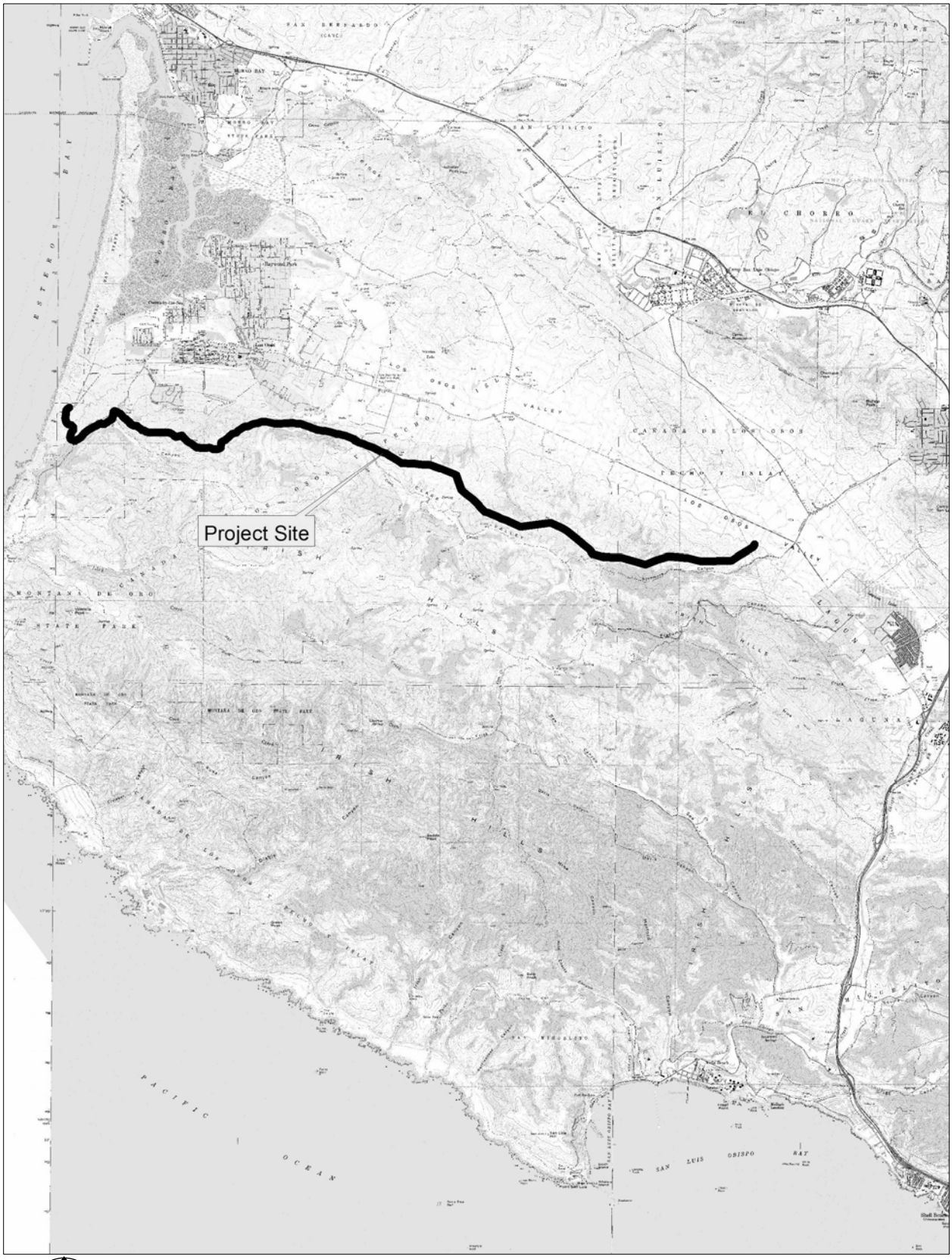
In 1998, as part of the China – U.S. cable project, AT&T pulled two additional fiber optic cables and two additional power cables through the existing HAW-5 cable conduit along the ridge route. The fiber optic cable was pulled from manholes located within the existing Sandspit Road and Rim Trail within the State Park and within the existing right of way along the ridge route to the AT&T 03 Cable Station building. As with the TPC-5 project, the County of San Luis Obispo determined that additional discretionary review was not necessary.



Source: ESRIDATA

NORTH
Not to Scale

Project Vicinity Map
FIGURE 1



Source: USGS quadrangle – Morro Bay South (35120C7) and San Luis Obispo (35120C6)

NORTH
Not to Scale

Project Location Map
FIGURE 2